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David Harvey

Over the last twenty years or so, "globalization" has become a key word for organizing our thoughts as to how the world works. How and why it moved to such a central position in our vocabulary is an interesting tale. I want here, however, to focus on the theoretical and political implications of the rise of such a mode of thought. To that end, I begin with two general sets of questions in order to highlight what appear to be important political changes in western discourses (though not necessarily in realities), including that of much of the socialist movement.

1) Why is it that the word "globalization" has recently entered into our discourses in the way it has? Who put it there and why? And what significance attaches to the fact that even among many "progressives" and "leftists" in the advanced capitalist world, words like "imperialism," "colonialism," and "neocolonialism" have increasingly taken a back seat to "globalization" as a way to organize thoughts and to chart political possibilities?

2) How has the conception of globalization been used politically? Has adoption of the term signalled a confession of powerlessness on the part of national, regional, and local working-class movements? Has belief in the term operated as a powerful deterrent to localized and even national political action? Are local and national working-class movements such insignificant cogs in the vast infernal global machine of international capitalism that there is no room for political manouever anywhere?

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Viewed from this perspective, the term globalization and all its associated baggage exact a severe political price. But before we reject it or abandon it entirely, it is useful to take a good hard look at what it incorporates and what we can learn, theoretically and politically, from the brief history of its use.

Let me begin with a suggestion: that we view "globalization" as a *process* rather than as a political-economic condition that has recently come into being. To view it this way is not to presume that the process is constant; nor does it preclude saying that the process has, for example, entered into a radically new stage or worked itself out to a particular or even "final" state. But a process-based definition makes us concentrate on how globalization has occurred and is occurring.

Certainly from 1492 onwards, and even before, the globalization process of capitalism was well under way. And it has never ceased to be of profound importance to capitalism's dynamic. Globalization has, therefore, been integral to capitalist development since its very inception. It is important to understand why.

The accumulation of capital has always been a profoundly geographical and spatial affair. Without the possibilities inherent in geographical expansion, spatial reorganization, and uneven geographical development, capitalism would long ago have ceased to function as a political-economic system. This perpetual turning to what I call "a spatial fix" to capitalism's contradictions has created a global historical geography of capital accumulation whose character needs to be well understood.

Marx and Engels emphasized the point in the *Communist Manifesto.* Modern industry not only creates the world market, they wrote, but the need for a constantly expanding market "chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe" so that it "must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere." They continue:

> The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country ... All old established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home,

> but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature (1952, 72).

If this is not a compelling description of globalization, then it is hard to imagine what would be. And it was, of course, precisely by way of this analysis that Marx and Engels derived the global imperative "working men of all countries unite" as a necessary condition for an anticapitalist and prosocialist revolution.

Since Marx and Engels, a variety of accounts has been offered of how capitalism has structured its geography (such as Lenin's theory of imperialism, Luxemburg's positioning of imperialism as the savior of capitalist accumulation, and Mao's depiction of primary and secondary contradictions in class struggle). These have subsequently been supplemented by more synthetic accounts of accumulation on a world scale (Amin), the production of a capitalist world system (Wallerstein), the development of underdevelopment (Frank and Rodney), unequal exchange (Emmanuel), and dependency theory (Cardoso). As Marxist ideas and political practices have spread throughout the globe (in a parallel process of globalization of class struggle), so innumerable local/national accounts of resistance to the invasions, disruptions, and imperialist designs of capitalism have been generated. And a widespread but less visible group of thinkers and practitioners has paid much closer attention to local/ regional differences and the role of urbanization as part of a process of uneven geographical development of capitalism (both of its productive forces and social relations) in space and the uneven geographical and social forms of anticapitalist struggle.

The effect is tacitly to recognize that the grounding for class struggle is often specific to places and that the universalism to which socialism aspires has to be built by negotiation among different place-specific demands, concerns, and aspirations. As Raymond Williams (1989, 242) suggested, the grounding of socialist politics always lies in what he called a

"militant particularism" embedded in "ways of life" and "structures of feeling" peculiar to place. By this he meant, in the first instance:

> The unique and extraordinary character of working-class self-organization... to connect particular struggles to a general struggle in one quite special way. It has set out, as a movement, to make real what is at first sight the extraordinary claim that the defence and advancement of certain particular *interests, properly brought together,* are in fact the general interest (1989, 249; my emphasis).

The further implication, which many socialists may be loath to accept, is that:

> A new theory of socialism must now centrally involve *place*. Remember the argument was that the proletariat had no country, the factor which differentiated it from the property owning classes. But place has been shown to be a crucial element in the bonding process-more so perhaps for the working class than the capital-owning classes-by the explosion of the international economy and the destructive effects of deindustrialization upon old communities. When capital has moved on, the importance of place is more clearly revealed (242).

It is not my intention to review the vast literature that deals with the spatial and geographical aspects of capitalist development and class struggle (even if such a task were feasible). But I do think it important to recognize a series of tensions and often uncomfortable compromises within the Marxist tradition over how to understand, theoretically and politically, the geographical dynamics of capital accumulation and class struggle. When, for example, Lenin and Luxemburg clashed on the national question, as the vast controversy on the possibility of socialism within one country (or even within one city) unfolded, as the Second International compromised with nationalism in the First World War, and as the Comintern subsequently swayed back and forth on how to interpret its own internationalism, so the socialist/communist movement never managed to evolve, politically or theoretically, a proper or satisfactory understanding of the geographical dynamics of capital accumulation and the geopolitics of class struggle.

A careful scrutiny of the rhetoric in the *Communist Manifesto* indicates a key source of the dilemma. For while it is clear from the passages cited that the bourgeoisie's quest for

class domination was (and is) a very geographical affair, the almost immediate reversion in the text to a purely temporal and diachronic account is very striking. It is hard, it seems, to be dialectical about space, leaving many Marxists in practice to follow Feuerbach in thinking that time is "the privileged category of the dialectician, because it excludes and subordinates where space tolerates and coordinates" (Ross 1988, xxx). Even the term "historical materialism," I note, erases the significance of geography, and if I have struggled these last few years to try to implant the idea of "historical-geographical materialism" it is because the very shift in that terminology prepares us to look more flexibly and, I hope, more cogently at the class significance of processes like globalization and uneven geographical development. And if I am now struggling in my current work (Harvey, 1996) with how to be dialectical about spatiotemporality (and the fusion of those terms is itself, I believe, highly significant), then it is because I feel we need far better ways to understand if not resolve politically the underlying tension within Marxist accounts between what often degenerates into either a temporal teleology of class triumphalism (now largely negated by the equally teleological class triumphalism of the bourgeoisie declaring the end of history) or a seemingly incoherent and uncontrollable geographical fragmentation of class and other forms of social struggle in every nook and cranny of the capitalist world.

In practice, even diachronic class struggle accounts are for the most part territorially bounded without much concern being shown to justify the geographical divisions upon which such accounts are based. We then have innumerable accounts of the making of the English, Welsh, French, German, Italian, Catalan, South African ', South Korean, and so on working classes, as if these are natural geographical entities. Attention focuses on class development within some circumscribed space which when scrutinized more closely, turns out to be a space within an international space of flows of capital, labor, information, and so on, in turn comprised of innumerable smaller spaces each with its own characteristics. When we look closely at the action described in Edward Thompson's classic account of *The Making of the English Working Class,* for example, it turns out to be a series of highly localized events often loosely conjoined in space. Foster may have rendered the differences somewhat too mechanical in his own account of *Class Struggle in the Industrial Revolution,* but it is, I think, undeniable that class structure, class consciousness, and class politics in Oldham, Northampton, and South Shields (read Colmar, Lille, and St. Etienne or Minneapolis, Mobile,

and Lowell) were quite differently constructed and worked out, making geographical difference within the nation-state rather more important than most would want to concede. This mode of thinking uncritically about supposedly "natural" geographical entities is now most familiarly perpetuated in neo-Marxist accounts of capital (particularly those inspired by "regulation theory") that make it seem as if there are distinctive German, British, Japanese, American, Swedish, Singaporean, Brazilian, and so on versions of capitalism (sometimes broken down into more regionalized orderings, such as North versus South in Italy, Brazil, Britain ... all in competition with each other within a global space economy.

So there is a clear line of tension within the Marxist tradition. On the one hand, we have spaceless and geographically undifferentiated accounts (mainly theoretical these days, though polemical and political versions can still be found) which understand capitalist development as a purely temporal process. Class struggle is primarily depicted as a matter of exploitation of one class by another and history is seen as an outcome of that struggle. On the other hand, we have geographical accounts in which class alliances (and this often includes a working class characterized by what Lenin condemned as a limiting trade-union consciousness) form within places to exploit class alliances in other places (with, perhaps, a *comprador* bourgeoisie as agent). The theoretical justification for viewing the exploitation of one class by another as homologous with the exploitation of one place by another has never been strong. And the assumption that struggles to liberate spaces (struggles for national liberation, for example) are progressive in the class-struggle sense and vice versa cannot stand up to very strong scrutiny. There are, in fact, numerous examples of each kind of struggle confounding the other. How, then, can we unconfound this problem?

One of the things that adoption of the term "globalization" now signals, I believe, is a profound geographical reorganization of capitalism, making many of the presumptions about the "natural" geographical units within which capitalism's historical trajectory develops less and less meaningful (if they ever were). We are therefore faced with a historic opportunity to seize the nettle of capitalism's geography, to see the production of space as a constitutive moment within (as opposed to something derivatively constructed by) the dynamics of capital accumulation and class struggle. In a sense, this is an opportunity for Marxism to emancipate itself from imprisonment within a hidden spatiality that has had the opaque power to dominate (and sometimes to confound) the logic of both our thinking and our politics. It also permits us

to understand better exactly how class and inter-place struggles can confound each other and to confront the capacity of capitalism to constrain class struggle through a geographical divide and rule of that struggle. We are in a position, furthermore, to understand the spatio-temporal contradictions inherent in capitalism and, through that understanding, better position ourselves to exploit the weakest link and so explode the worst horrors of capitalism's penchant for violent though "creative" destruction.

How, then, can we dance to this agenda, both theoretically and politically?

There are, of course, innumerable signs of a willingness to take on the theoretical implications of changing spatialities and reterritorializations. It was, I believe, one of the main virtues of Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus,* for example, to point out that the territorialization and reterritorialization of capitalism is an on-going process. But here, as in many other accounts, the virtue of a respatialization of social thought has been bought at the cost of partial and sometimes radical breaks with Marxist formulations (both theoretical and political). In my own work, I have sought to show that there are ways to integrate spatialities into Marxist theory and practice without necessarily disrupting central propositions, though in the course of such an integration all sorts of modifications to both theory and practice do arise. So let me summarize some of the main features of this argument.

I begin with the simplest propositions I can find. There are dual tensions deeply embedded within any materialist accounting of the circulation process of capital. These periodically and inescapably erupt as powerful moments of historical-geographical contradiction.

First, capitalism is under the impulsion to accelerate turnover time, to speed up the circulation of capital and, consequently, to revolutionize the time horizons of development. But it can do so only through long-term investments (in, for example, the built environment as well as in elaborate and stable infrastructures for production, consumption, exchange, communication, and the like). A major stratagem of crisis avoidance, furthermore, lies in absorbing overaccumulated capital in long-term projects (the famous "public works" launched by the state in times of depression, for example) and this slows down the turnover time of capital. There is, consequently, an extraordinary array of contradictions that collect around the issue of the time-horizon within which different capitals function. Historically, and now is no exception, this tension has primarily been registered through the contradictions between

money and finance capital (where turnover is now almost instantaneous), on the one hand, and merchant, manufacturing, agrarian, information, construction, service, and state capitals on the other. But contradictions can be found within factions (between currency and bond markets, for example, or between land developers and speculators). All sorts of mechanisms exist, of course, for coordinating among capital dynamics working on different temporal scales and rhythms. But uneven development of turnover times and temporalities, of the sort produced by the recent implosion of time-horizons in a very powerful financial sector, can create an unwelcome temporal compression that is deeply stressful to other factions of capital, including, of course, that embodied in the capitalist state. The time-horizon set by Wall Street simply cannot accommodate to the temporalities of social and ecological reproduction systems in a responsive way. And it goes without saying that the rapid turnover time set in financial markets is even more stressful for workers (their job security, their skills, etc.) and for the lifeworld of socio-ecological reproduction. This stress-point is one of the crucial features of political economy these last twenty years.

Second, capitalism is under the impulsion to eliminate all spatial barriers, to "annihilate space through time" as Marx puts it, but it can do so only through the production of a fixed space. Capitalism thereby produces a geographical landscape (of space relations, of territorial organization, and of systems of places linked in a "global" division of labor and of functions) appropriate to its own dynamic of accumulation at a particular moment of its history, only to have to destroy and rebuild that geographical landscape to accommodate accumulation at a later date. There are a number of distinct aspects to this process:

1) Reductions in the cost and time of movement over space have been a continuing focus of technological innovation. Turnpikes, canals, railroads, electric power, the automobile, air and jet transport have progressively liberated the movements of commodities and people from the constraints of the friction of distance. Parallel innovations in the postal system, the telegraph, the radio, telecommunications, and the world-wide web have now pushed the cost of transfer of information close to zero.

2) The building of fixed physical infrastructures to facilitate this movement as well as to support the activities of production, exchange, distribution, and consumption

exercises a quite different force upon the geographical landscape. More and more capital is embedded in space as landed capital, as capital fixed in the land, creating a "second nature" and a geographically organized resource structure that more and more inhibits the trajectory of capitalist development. The idea of somehow dismantling the urban infrastructures of Tokyo-Yokohama or New York City overnight and starting all over again is simply ludicrous. The effect is to make the geographical landscape of capitalism more and more sclerotic with time, thus creating a major contradiction with the increasing liberty of movement. That tendency is made even more emphatic to the degree that the institutions of place become strongly articulated and loyalties to places (and their specific qualities) become a significant factor in political action.

3) The third element is the construction of territorial organization, primarily (though not solely) state powers to regulate money, law, politics and to monopolize the means of coercion and violence according to a sovereign territorial (and sometime extraterritorial) will. There are, of course, innumerable Marxist theories of the state, many of which engage in an unhealthy degree of abstraction from history and geography, making it seem as if states like Gabon and Liberia are on a par with the United States or Germany and failing to recognize that most of the state boundaries in the world were drawn between 1870 and 1925 (and a good half of those were drawn up arbitrarily by the British and French alone). Most states became independent only after 1945 and many of them have been in search of a nation ever since (but then this was as historically true of France and Mexico as it has recently been of Nigeria or Rwanda). So while it is true that the Treaty of Westphalia established for the first time the principle that independent sovereign states, each recognizing the others' autonomy and territorial integrity, should coexist in the capitalist world, the process of globalizing the territorial organization of the world according to that principle took several centuries to complete (accompanied by a good deal of violence). And the processes that gave rise to that system can just as easily dissolve it, as some commentators are now arguing is indeed happening as supranational organizations (such as the European Union) and regional autonomy movements within nation states do their work. In short, we have to understand the

processes of state formation and dissolution in terms of the unstable processes of globalization/territorialization. We then see a process of territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization continuously at work throughout the historical geography of capitalism. (This was one of the fundamental points that Deleuze and Guattari picked upon in *Anti-Oedipus.)*

Armed with these concepts we can, I think, better understand the process of globalization as a process of production of uneven temporal and geographical development. And, as I shall hope to show, that shift of language can have some healthy political consequences, liberating us from the more oppressive and confining language of an omnipotent process of globalization.

Bearing that in mind, let me come back to what the term "globalization" might signify and why it has taken on a new allure and thereby become so important in recent times. Three major shifts stand out:

1) Financial deregulation began in the United States in the early 1970s as a forced response to the stagflation then occurring internally and to the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system of international trade and exchange (largely because of the uncontrolled growth of the Eurodollar market). I think it important to recognize that the wave of financial deregulation was less a deliberate strategy thought out by capital than a concession to realities (even if certain segments of capital stood to benefit far more than others). But Bretton Woods was a global system, so what really happened here was a shift from one global system (hierarchically organized and largely controlled politically by the United States) to another global system that was more decentralized and coordinated through the market, making the financial conditions of capitalism far more volatile and far more unstable. The rhetoric that accompanied this shift was deeply implicated in the promotion of the term "globalization" as a virtue. In my more cynical moments I find myself thinking that it was the financial press that conned us all (myself included) into believing in "globalization" as something new when it was nothing more than a promotional gimmick to make the best of a necessary adjustment in the system of international finance. I note, coincidentally, that the financial press has for some time now been much more emphatic about the regionalization going on in financial markets (the

Japanese coprosperity sphere, the NAFTA, and the European Union being the obvious power blocs) and that even many of the boosters of globalization in the capitalist press are warning that the "backlash" against globalization (mainly in the form of multiple populist nationalisms) are to be taken seriously and that globalization is in danger of becoming synonymous with "a brakeless train wreaking havoc" (Friedman 1996, A 19).

2) The media and communications system and, above all, the so-called information revolution brought some significant changes to the organization of production and consumption as well as to the definition of entirely new wants and needs. The ultimate "dematerialization of space" in the communications field had its origins in the military apparatus but was immediately seized upon by financial institutions and multinational capital as a means to coordinate their activities instantaneously over space. 'The effect has been to form a so-called de-materialized cyberspace in which certain kinds of important transactions (primarily financial and speculative) could occur. But then we also came to watch revolutions and wars live on television. The space and time of media and communications imploded in a world where the monopolization of media power has become more and more of a problem (in spite of proclamations of libertarian democratization via the internet).

The idea of an "information revolution" is powerfully present these days and is often viewed as the dawning of a new era of globalization within which the information society reigns supreme. It is easy to make too much of this. The newness of it all impresses, but then the newness of the railroad and the telegraph, the automobile, the radio, and the telephone in their day impressed equally. These earlier examples are instructive since each in its own way did change the way the world works, the ways in which production and consumption could be organized, politics conducted, and the ways in which social relations among people could become converted on an ever widening scale into social relations among things. And it is clear that the relations between working and living, within the workplace, in cultural forms, are indeed changing very rapidly in response to informational technology. Interestingly, this is a key component in the right-wing political agenda in the United States. The new technology, says Newt Gingrich (advised by Alvin Toffler, whose right-wing utopianism rests entirely on

the idea of a "third-wave" information revolution) is inherently emancipatory, but in order to liberate this emancipatory force from its political chains it is essential to pursue a political revolution to dismantle all of the institutions of "second wave" industrial society-government regulation, the welfare state, collective institutions of wage bargaining, and the like. That this is a vulgar version of the Marxist argument that changes in productive forces drive social relations and history should not be lost upon us. Nor should we ignore the strong teleological tone to this right-wing rhetoric (perhaps best captured in Margaret Thatcher's famous declaration that "there is no alternative").

3) The cost and time of moving commodities and people also ratcheted downwards in another of those shifts that have periodically occurred within the history of capitalism. This liberated all sorts of activities from former spatial constraints, permitting far more rapid adjustments in locations of production, consumption, populations, and the like. I suspect that when-the history of the globalization process comes to be written, this simple shift in the cost of overcoming space will be seen as far more significant than the so-called information revolution *per se* (though both are part and parcel of each other in practice).

These three shifts in the globalization process were accompanied by a number of other important features, perhaps best thought of as derivative from the primary forces at work.

1) Production and organizational forms changed (particularly of multinational capital, though many small entrepreneurs also seized new opportunities), making abundant use of the reduced costs of commodity and information movement. Offshore production that began in the 1960s suddenly became much more general. (It has now spread with a vengeance even to Japan.) The geographical dispersal and fragmentation of production systems, divisions of labor, and specializations of tasks ensued, albeit often in the midst of an increasing centralization of corporate power through mergers, takeovers, or joint production agreements which transcended national boundaries. Corporations have more power to command space, making individual places much more vulnerable to their whims. The global television set, the global car, became an everyday aspect of political-economic life. The closing down of production in one place and the opening up of production somewhere else became

a familiar story-some large-scale production operations have moved four or five times in the last twenty years.

2) The world wage-labor force more than doubled in less than twenty years. This occurred in part through rapid population growth but also through bringing in more and more of the world's population (particularly women) into the wage-labor force, in, for example, South Korea, Taiwan, and Africa, as well as ultimately in the ex-Soviet bloc and China. The global proletariat is now far larger than ever (which should, surely, put a steely glint of hope into every socialist's eye). But it has been radically feminized. It is also geographically dispersed, culturally heterogeneous, and therefore much harder to organize into a united movement.

3) Global population has also been on the move. The United States now has the highest proportion of foreign born in the country since the 1920s, and while there are all sorts of attempts to keep populations out, the flood of migratory movements seems impossible to stop. State boundaries are less porous for people and for labor than they are for capital, but they are still porous enough. London, Paris, and Rome are far more immigrant cities than they used to be, making immigration a far more significant issue worldwide (including within the labor movement itself) than has ever been the case before (even Tokyo is caught up in the process). By the same token, organizing labor in the face of the considerable ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural diversity generated out of migratory movements also poses particular problems that the socialist movement has not often found easy to solve.

4) Urbanization ratcheted up into hyperurbanization, particularly after 1950 with the pace of urbanization accelerating to create a major ecological, political, economic, and social revolution in the spatial organization of the world's population. The proportion of an increasing global population living in cities has doubled in thirty years, and we now observe massive spatial concentrations of population on a scale hitherto regarded as inconceivable. Organizing class struggle in, say, Manchester or Chicago in the 1870s was a quite different proposition from organizing class struggle (or even developing the institutions of a representative democracy) in contemporary Sao Paulo, Cairo, Lagos, Shanghai, Bombay, and so on, with their populations reaching close to or over the twenty-million mark.

5) The territorialization of the world has changed not only because of the end of the Cold War. Perhaps most important has been the changing role of the state, which has lost some (though not all) traditional powers to control the mobility of capital (particularly finance and money capital). State operations have, consequently, been more strongly disciplined by money capital and finance than ever before. Structural adjustment and fiscal austerity have become the name of the game, and the state has to some degree been reduced to the role of finding ways to promote a favorable business climate. Even Japan is now suffering from rapid movement of production operations out from the home base to China and other cheaper labor zones in Southeast Asia. The "globalization thesis" here became a powerful ideological tool to beat upon socialists, welfare statists, nationalists, and so on. When the British Labour party was forced to succumb to IMF demands to enforce austerity, it became apparent that there were limits to the national autonomy of fiscal policy (a condition the French also had to acknowledge after 1981). Welfare for the poor has largely been replaced, therefore, by public subventions to capital. (Mercedes-Benz recently received one-quarter billion dollars of subventions in a package from the state of Alabama in order to persuade it to locate there.)

Reterritorialization has not stopped at the nation-state. Global institutions of management of the economy, environment, and politics have proliferated as have regional blocs (like the NAFTA and the European Union) at a supranational scale, and strong processes of decentralization (sometimes through political rnovements-sometimes violently separatist-for regional autonomy or, as in the United States, through an increasing emphasis upon States' rights within the federal system) are also to be found. State formation is, furthermore, now seen as one key means to defend ethnic and cultural identities and environmental qualities in the face of time-space compression and global commodification. And it is also seen as the prime locus of that "backlash" against globalization that appeals to populist nationalism.

6) But while individual states lost some of their powers, what I call geopolitical democratization created new opportunities. It became harder for any core power to exercise discipline over others and easier for peripheral powers to insert themselves into the capitalist competitive game. Money power is a "leveller and cynic." But, as

Marx observes, a powerful antinomy then arises: while qualitatively "money had no bounds to its efficacy," the quantitative limits to money in the hands of individuals (and states) limits or augments their social power in important ways. Given deregulation of finance, for example, it was impossible to prevent Japan from exercising influence as a major financial power. States had to become much more concerned with their competitiveness (a subtheme of the globalization argument which has become very important). Competitive states could do well in global competition and this often meant that low-wage states with strong labor discipline did better than others. Labor control became, therefore, a vital ideological issue within the globalization argument, again pushing socialist arguments onto the defensive. Authoritarian, relatively homogeneous territories organized on corporatist principles like Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan-have done relatively well in an era when "free-market stalinism" (for such it should be called) became much more the norm within the capitalist globalization process.

Two broad questions can be posed about these trends. While everyone will, I think, concede the quantitative changes that have occurred, what really needs to be debated is whether these quantitative changes are great enough and synergistic enough when taken together to put us in a qualitatively new era of capitalist development, demanding a radical revision of our theoretical concepts and our political apparatus (to say nothing of our aspirations). The idea that this is the case is signalled primarily by all the "posts" that we see around us (e.g., postindustrialism, postmodernism). So has there been a qualitative transformation wrought on the basis of these quantitative shifts? My own answer is a very qualified "yes" to that question, immediately accompanied by the assertion that there has not been any fundamental revolution in the mode of production and its associated social relations and that if there is any real qualitative trend it is towards the reassertion of early nineteenth-century capitalist values coupled with a twenty-first-century penchant for pulling everyone (and everything that can be exchanged) into the orbit of capital while rendering large segments of the world's population permanently redundant in relation to the basic dynamics of capital accumulation. This is where the powerful image,

conceded and feared by international capital, of contemporary globalization as a "brakeless train wreaking havoc" comes into play.

If the argument for a limited qualitative shift has to be taken seriously, then the question is how to reformulate both theory and politics. And it is here that my proposed shift of language from "globalization" to "uneven spatio-temporal development" of capitalism has most to offer. For conditions of uneven geographical and temporal development offer abundant opportunities for political organizing and action at the same time as they pose particular difficulties. Understanding the difficulties is crucial to the formulation of an adequate politics.

The primary significance for the Left in all of these changes is that the relatively privileged position of the working classes in the advanced capitalist countries has been much reduced relative to conditions of labor in the rest of the world. (This transition is most glaringly seen in the reemergence of sweatshops as a fundamental form of industrial organization in New York and Los Angeles over the last twenty years.) The secondary point is that conditions of life in advanced capitalism have felt the full brunt of the capitalist capacity for "creative destruction," making for extreme volatility of local, regional, and national economic prospects. (This year's boom town becomes next year's depressed region.) The neoliberal justification for all this is that the hidden hand of the market will work to the benefit of all, provided there is as little state interference (and they should add-though they usually don't-monopoly power) as possible. The effect is to make the violence and creative destruction of uneven geographical development (through, for example, geographical reorganization of production) just as widely felt in the traditional heartlands of capitalism as elsewhere, in the midst of an extraordinary technology of affluence and conspicuous consumption, which is instantaneously communicated worldwide as one potential set of aspirations. No wonder even the promoters of globalization have to take the condition of backlash seriously. As Klaus Schwab and Claude Smadja have recently written:

> Economic globalization has entered a critical phase. A mounting backlash against its effects, especially in the industrial democracies, is threatening a very disruptive impact on economic activity and social stability in many countries. The mood in these democracies is one of helplessness and anxiety, which helps explain the rise of a new brand of populist politicians. This can easily turn into revolt (cited in Friedman 1996, A19).

The socialist movement has, of course, to configure how to make use of these revolutionary possibilities. It has to counter the trend towards multiple right-wing populist nationalisms, often edged with outright appeals to a localized fascism. It has to focus class struggle around the construction of a socially just and ecologically sensitive socialist society. To do this, however, the socialist movement has to come to terms with the extraordinarily powerful waves of uneven spatio-temporal development that make organizing so precarious and so difficult. But in exactly the same way that Marx saw the necessity that workers of all countries should unite to combat the globalization of the bourgeoisie, so the socialist movement has to find ways to be just as flexible over space in its theory and its political practice as the capitalist class has become.

There is, I believe, one useful way to begin to think of this. Ask first where is anticapitalist struggle to be found? The answer is, I think, everywhere. There is not a region in the world where manifestations of anger and discontent with the capitalist system cannot be found, and in some places anticapitalist movements are strongly rather than weakly implanted. Localized "militant particularisms" (and I deliberately return to Raymond Williams's phrase) are everywhere to be found, from the militia movement in the Michigan woods (much of it violently anticapitalist and anticorporate as well as racist and exclusionary) to the movements of Mexican, Indian, and Brazilian peasants militating against the NAFTA, World Bank development projects, and the like. And there is plenty of class struggle at work even in the heartlands of capitalist accumulation (varying from the extraordinary outbursts of militancy in France in the fall of 1995 to the office-cleaners strike in New York in early 1996). If we look carefully within the interstices of the uneven spatio-temporal development of capitalism, then we will find a veritable ferment of opposition. But this opposition, though militant, often remains particularise (sometimes extremely so) and always threatens to coalesce around exclusionary and populist-nationalist political movements. To say the opposition is anticapitalist is not to say it is necessarily prosocialist or that it can even get to the point of understanding that some alternative to capitalism is needed. This broad-based anticapitalist movement lacks coherence and a concrete vision as to what an anticapitalist alternative might look like. The movement also lacks direction: the moves of one element confound and sometimes check another, making it far too easy for capitalist class interests to exercise a

divide-and-rule form of domination. It lacks, in short, an agreed-upon framework for understanding how different struggles might relate and how to shape a global anticapitalist agenda.

One of the historical strengths of the Marxist movement has been its on-going commitment to synthesize diverse struggles with divergent and multiple aims into a more universal anticapitalist movement with a global aim. Let me now distill from the inspiration of that tradition a number of arguments that seem particularly applicable to the current conjuncture.

The work of synthesis has to be on-going, since the fields and terrains of struggle are perpetually changing as the capitalist dynamic and as global conditions change. The Marxist tradition has an immense contribution to make towards that work of synthesis, because it has pioneered the tools with which to find the commonality within multiplicities and differences and to identify primary/secondary/tertiary conditions of oppression and exploitation. I recall, here, Raymond Williams's phrase as to how "the defense and advancement of certain particular interests, *properly brought together,* are in fact the general interest" and emphasize "properly brought together" (1989, 249) as the core task to be addressed. This work needs to be renewed.

We need first to understand the production of uneven spatio-temporal development and the intense contradictions that now exist within that field not only for capitalist trajectories of development (entailing, as they do, a great deal of self-destruction, devaluation, and bankruptcy) but also for populations rendered increasingly vulnerable to the violence of down-sizing, unemployment, collapse of services, and degradation in living standards and in environmental qualities. We need to go beyond the particularities and emphasize the *pattern* and the systemic qualities of the damage being wrought. And that pattern is perhaps best captured by calculating the consequences of neoliberalism as it works through globalization.

We need, furthermore, to extend that analysis outwards to embrace a diverse array of issues. We need to show how issues like AIDS, global warming, local environmental degradation, the destructions of local cultural traditions are inherently class issues, and how building a community in class struggle can better alleviate the conditions of oppression across a broad spectrum of social action. This is not, I emphasize, a plea for pluralism but a plea that we seek to uncover the class content of a wide array of anticapitalist concerns. This will

encounter opposition from within the radical Left, for to insist upon a class formulation invites dismissal as pure sectarianism of the old-guard sort (to say nothing of being rejected as passé in academia). But "all for one and one for all" in anticapitalist struggle continues to be a vital slogan for any effective political action, and that inevitably implies some sort of class politics.

This work of synthesis has, however, to re-root itself in the organic conditions of daily life. This does not entail abandoning the abstractions that Marx and the Marxists have bequeathed us, but it does mean revalidating and revaluing those abstractions through immersion in popular struggles, some of which may not appear on the surface to be proletarian in the sense traditionally given to that term. In this regard, Marxism has its own sclerotic tendencies to combat, its own embedded fixed capital of concepts, institutions, practices, and politics which can function on the one hand as an excellent resource and on the other as a dogmatic barrier to action. We need to discern what is useful and what is not in this fixed capital of our intellect and politics, and it would be surprising if there were not, from time to time, bitter argument over what to jettison and what to hold. Nevertheless, the discussion must be launched.

For example, the traditional Marxist categories with which I began-imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism-appear far too simplistic to capture the intricacies of uneven spatio-temporal development. Perhaps they were always so, but the reterritorialization and respatialization of capitalism, particularly over the last thirty years, makes such categories seem far too crude to express the geopolitical complexities within which class struggle must now unfold. While a term like "globalization" repeats that error in a disempowering way for socialist and anticapitalist movements, we cannot recapture the political initiative by reversion to a rhetoric of imperialism and neocolonialism, however superior the political content of those latter terms might be. Here, too, I believe a shift to a conception of uneven spatio-temporal development (or, more simply, uneven geographical development) can be helpful in order both to appreciate the tasks to be surmounted and the politics of multiple militant particularism that need to be combined.

I take up, finally, just one other organizational point. The traditional method of Marxist intervention has been via an avantgarde political party. But difficulties have arisen from the superimposition of a single aim, a singular objective, a simple goal upon

anticapitalist movements that have a multiplicity of objectives. As many critics within the Marxist tradition have pointed out, the emancipatory thrust of Marxism here creates the danger of its own negation. It is therefore vital to understand that liberating humanity for its own development is to open up the production of difference, even to open up a terrain for contestation within and among differences, rather than to suppress them. This is something that the right wing sometimes argues for-though it rarely practices it, as its turn to fundamentalism indicates. But we should note the power of the argument. The production of real as opposed to commodified cultural divergence, for example, can be just as easily posed as an aim of anticapitalist struggle. The aim to create a unified, homogenous socialist person was never real and requires more careful articulation if it is to be useful. After all, capitalism has been a hegemonic force for the production of a relatively homogeneous capitalist person, and this reductionism of all beings and all cultural differences to a common commodified base has itself been the focus of massive anticapitalistic sentiments. The socialist cause must, surely, be just as much about emancipation from that bland homogeneity as it is about the creation of some analogous condition. This is not, however, a plea for an unchecked relativism or unconstrained postmodern eclecticism but for a serious discussion of the relations between commonality/difference, the particularity of the one and the universalism of the other. And it is at this point that socialism as an alternative vision of how society will work, social relations unfold, human potentialities be realized, itself becomes the focus of conceptual work.

We still badly need a socialist avant-garde. But we do not necessarily need an oldstyle avant-garde party that imposes a singular goal. On the other band, we cannot function either armed only with Derrida's fantasy of a "New International without status, without title and without name ... without party, without country, without national community." This is, as Eagleton (1995, 37) remarks, "the ultimate poststructuralist fantasy: an opposition without anything as distastefully systemic or drably 'orthodox' as an opposition, a dissent beyond all formulable discourse, a promise which would betray itself in the act of fulfillment, a perpetual excited openness to the Messiah who had better not let us down by doing anything as determinate as coming." For Derrida, the move that makes this possible is to separate "dialectical materialism" from all tangible sense of historical-geographical conditions as well as from any rootedness in a tangible and organized politics. I here part company with that

genre of relational dialectics that has become pure idealism and find myself writing *against* an emerging avant-gardist trend, grounded in dialectical and relational ways of thinking, producing what might be called "a new idealism" in which thought and discourse are believed to be all that matter in powering the historical geography of socio-ecological and political-economic change. We have to abandon that particular version of avant-gardism, now so trendy in the academy, in which immersion in the flows of thought and ideality is somehow imagined to be radical and revolutionary in itself.

We need not only to understand but also to create organizations, institutions, doctrines, programs, formalized structures, and the like. And these political activities must be firmly grounded in the concrete historical and geographical conditions under which human action unfolds. Between the traditional avant-gardism of communist parties and the idealized avant-gardism (what might be called the Specter of Derrida) there lies a terrain of political organization and struggle that desperately cries out for cultivation. That terrain is not empty of possibilities. There are several substantive movements that claim our attention. Consider, for example, the 30 January 1996 call of the Zapatista Army for National Liberation for "A World Gathering against Neoliberalism and for Humanity," a whole series of intercontinental congresses of those opposed to neoliberal capitalism through globalization. Their call points out how the power of money everywhere "humiliates dignities, insults honesties, and assassinates hopes. Renamed as Neoliberalism, the historic crime in the concentration of privileges, wealth, and impunities democratizes misery and hopelessness." The name "globalization" signifies, they suggest, the "modern war" of capital "which assassinates and forgets." Instead of humanity, this Neoliberalism "offers us stock market value indexes, instead of dignity it offers us globalization of misery, instead of hope it offers us emptiness, instead of life it offers us the international of terror." Against this international of terror, they conclude, "we must raise the international of hope." If only, they suggest, everyone touched by the violence of neoliberal globalization could come together politically, then the days of this "brakeless train wreaking havoc" would be numbered.

The work of synthesis and organizing anticapitalist struggles on a variegated terrain of uneven geographical development must proceed apace. That is what avantgarde political organization should now be focusing upon. We have abundant work to do. Let's do it!

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